

BRIEFING

Bridge work – page 6

21st century communications from the City of Bloomington

Volume 9, Number 6

December 2001

In this issue...

Word from the Mayor

The key to making it through an emergency is preparedness. The City of Bloomington's Emergency Management assures us we know what to do in case of a disaster. *Page 2.*

Financial focus

The City's financial status remains strong despite the events on September 11 and an economic downturn. Bloomington Chief Financial Officer Terri Heaton comments on the 2002 budget. *Page 3.*

Relive 2001 in Bloomington!

Here's your opportunity to take a final look at the events that helped shape Bloomington in 2001. The City's cable news magazine show "Bloomington Today" will take a look back at some of the year's notable events. Hosted by Rolanda Taylor-Enroth, highlights include progress on new City facilities such as the Police/City Hall/Arts Center building and the Family Aquatics Center. "Bloomington - Year in Review" will appear December 26 through January 8 on The Bloomington Channel 14. For times, check your *Sun Current*, consult www.TBC14.org or call 952-563-8874.

Adopt a water hydrant

Do a good deed for your community this winter by clearing snow from your water hydrant. This will provide quick access for firefighters and water maintenance workers in case of an emergency.

**The colder, the better**

What do Minnesotans do in winter? They go outside! Parks and Recreation operates 17 outdoor ice skating rinks in Bloomington parks. *Page 5.*

Keep water meters from freezing

Don't forget to protect your water meter this winter. During sub-zero temperatures, water meters housed in well pits or enclosed closets may freeze and break. To avoid a potential problem, allow heat to circulate around the meter by leaving the access unobstructed and the door to the meter closet open.

Penn Avenue bridge closing

The Penn Avenue bridge across I-494 will close in January for reconstruction. The new design, schedule and an alternative route are presented. *Page 6.*

Keep it clear

Sidewalks and driveway openings are difficult to clear as snow accumulates. Please assist maintenance crews and accommodate pedestrians by placing your trash or recycling bin at the end of your driveway, not on the sidewalk or in the street. For more information, call Public Works at 952-563-8762.

New digs

A groundbreaking ceremony was held in October for the new Police/City Hall/Arts Center. On hand to celebrate were Mayor Gene Winstead, current and former Councilmembers and City staff. Also taking their turns with the shovels were members of the Facilities Task Force, fine arts organizations and the community.

The new facility will redevelop the triangle at West 98th Street and West Old Shakopee Road. Demolition of buildings on the site started in September. Construction began in November and is expected to take 18 to 20 months. The grand opening is planned for spring 2003. ♦



Services Update

Enhanced Police services at the Mall of America



The Police Department will increase its presence at the Mall of America. A new storefront office, designed to provide Bloomington Police with a more proactive approach to crime prevention, will open in January.

Planning for the storefront location began more than a year ago. Staff met to discuss police response and ways to enhance service to the Mall, which attracts 43 million visitors a year.

"The Mall of America is a safe place for visitors, it is successful and we are trying to preserve this asset to our community now and into the future," said Bloomington Police Chief Roger Willow. "Officers who are familiar with the facility, businesses and management will be there on a consistent basis so they can address problems in a more proactive way."

Crime prevention

The main focus of the new initiative is to work with business owners in crime prevention. This includes education and training on ways to prevent theft and enhance communication.

**Additional benefits**

A total of six officers will be at the Mall of America station. The additional police will provide better coverage and service to the east side neighborhoods of Bloomington by allowing officers assigned in the area to concentrate on non-Mall related calls. The extra officers will also assist the Investigations Unit.

Mall related revenues will cover the costs of the police officers.

Visible presence

Providing a safe and secure shopping experience, as well as developing a partnership with businesses to maintain a successful retail environment, benefits the

community. The Police Department is confident that the officers' visible presence will also deter crime.

"Our officers will be visible and interacting with Mall businesses," said Sergeant Jeff Potts, who will supervise the office. "We also have a partnership with the more than 120 members of Mall security."

Location and Hours

The new storefront office is located on the second level of the Mall of America, near the east entrance, and will be staffed during retail hours.

For more information, call the Bloomington Police at 952-563-4900. ♦

Election results

In the November General Election, the following Councilmembers were elected to the 2002 City Council:

At Large	Dave Abrams
District III	Steve Elkins
District IV	Vern F. Wilcox

City of Bloomington
2215 West Old Shakopee Road
Bloomington MN 55431-3096

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Services that strengthen our community

Mayor Gene Winstead

This series highlights some of the many City services that are performed with quiet efficiency in the background of our busy lives. Over the course of this year, we look in-depth at these services that strengthen our community.

Emergency Management is prepared for service

The aftermath of the terrorist attacks showed us how a city like New York is prepared to handle emergencies. Hundreds of police, emergency medical personnel and firefighters responded quickly to the call for help. Hospitals were on alert and triage units were set up to treat incoming victims. Temporary shelters were set up for those in need. Recovery efforts were initiated to haul debris.

Bloomington, like New York and all cities with a population of more than 10,000, has an emergency management system in place so that we are prepared for any emergency.

Disasters come in different forms. Tornadoes, floods or hazardous chemical spills causing more extensive damage than normally handled by City staff would be the disasters most likely to affect Bloomington. We may not be able to predict when a disaster will happen, or even what it will be, but planning for a possible event helps us to be prepared.

There are four elements to emergency management systems. They include:

Public Education

Emergency Management takes the steps to minimize damage in a disaster. During Severe Weather or Winter

Awareness Weeks, the Emergency Manager receives information from the state and starts an educational campaign via the local *Sun Current* newspaper, the City's cable television channel and the City's Web site. Knowledge of what to do in a disaster can minimize its impact and destruction.

Planning

What risks are potential hazards for Bloomington? A look at the history of emergencies in our community shows high winds, tornadoes and floods. Training the community helps to prepare for possible events. The Emergency Manager coordinates practice disaster scenarios and tornado drills which are held at schools, offers businesses, schools and organizations help in developing their emergency action plans and tests warning sirens monthly. The City also has an emergency plan that covers other hazards and is reviewed yearly.

Response

Police, Fire, Emergency Medical Service and other City departments are quickly mobilized when called to an emergency. When there is a hazardous spill, personnel arrive on the scene to determine the size of the problem and what resources they will need. The dispatch center gets information out to other

"Preparation is the key to good service. By working hard to prepare for disasters, we know what to do if something happens."

*Lieutenant Paul McCullough,
City of Bloomington Emergency Manager*



CHEMICAL SPILL RESPONSE



STORM DEBRIS CLEANUP

September 11

How the City of Bloomington responded

Preparedness is the key element to our City's emergency plan. In a situation requiring quick actions, the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) is the communications hub where information is shared and can be dispatched to other departments.

On September 11, the City of Bloomington's emergency plan was put in motion. The EOC included the Chief of Police, the City Manager, the Emergency Manager and other City staff.

- ◆ The Emergency Response Unit, Bomb Squad and the Fire Department were readied.
- ◆ Extra Police were called in.
- ◆ Allina Medical Transportation increased coverage in the southeast Hennepin County area.
- ◆ All Police detectives were dispatched to field locations.
- ◆ Police Officers assisted in securing the Mall of America, which made a decision to close.
- ◆ Public Works personnel increased their level of readiness with special vigilance on the utility infrastructure.

Following a briefing by Metropolitan Airports Commission, Federal Aviation Administration and Federal Bureau of Investigation personnel, the increased level of readiness was reduced when all planes were on the ground nationwide. ◆

RESPONDING TO EVERY EMERGENCY

departments, including Public Works or Utilities, after a storm when trees have downed power lines or are blocking streets. All personnel have been trained in these areas so when they respond, everything falls into place.

Recovery

If a disaster were to occur, recovery is the process to get things back to normal. Emergency Management works with the community to help businesses reopen or get people back into their homes if a storm left them with no power, no water or damaged property. Emergency Management connects people with the resources they need by helping set up offices for agencies including the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the state, who may come into the community after a disaster.

High degree of readiness

The events of September 11 underscore the merits of the Police and Fire Departments and Emergency Medical personnel in Bloomington and across the nation. Emergency plans are continually revised as we learn from history what to prepare for. While natural disasters or other emergencies can't be predicted, we can be prepared in order to respond quickly and recover effectively. I am confident the City of Bloomington is prepared.

For more information, call Bloomington Emergency Manager Paul McCullough at 952-563-8834 or email pmccullough@ci.bloomington.mn.us. ◆

City receives national honors

Two videos produced by the City of Bloomington garnered top honors at a national competition for city and county communications.

The City-County Communications and Marketing Association (3CMA) presented "Savvy Awards" to Bloomington at its annual conference in September.

"The Tech Team Report" captured a Silver Circle award in the category of most creative program for least dollars spent. Presented in a newscast format, the video report explained the latest technology upgrades in the City. The judges said, "Bloomington has created a series of informative videos... that anyone would enjoy watching."

The City also took home an Award of Excellence for "At Your Service." The video spotlights seven employees whose efforts help the City achieve quality services at an affordable price. It was produced for the 2001 State of the City.

For more information, contact Diann Kirby, Communications Administrator, at 952-563-8818. ◆

City Council

Mayor	Gene Winstead	952-888-1258(h) mayor@ci.bloomington.mn.us
Councilmembers	council@ci.bloomington.mn.us	
At Large	Dave Abrams	952-885-0506(h)
At Large	Mike Fossum	952-885-9056(h) 612-673-3645(w)
District II	Heather Harden	952-835-5919(h)
District III	Alisa Ornat	952-944-1156(h)
After 1/1/02	Steve Elkins	952-835-2118(h)
District I	Steve Peterson	952-884-3262(h)
District IV	Vern Wilcox	952-854-1425(h)
City Manager	Mark Bernhardson	952-563-8780 citymanager@ci.bloomington.mn.us

We are accessible!

Stop by or write:

City of Bloomington
2215 W. Old Shakopee Road
Bloomington MN 55431-3096

Phone:

952-563-8700

TTY:

952-563-8740

FAX:

952-563-8715

E-mail:

dkirby@ci.bloomington.mn.us

Web site:

www.ci.bloomington.mn.us

More options:

For Braille, larger print or computer disk, contact Diann Kirby, 952-563-8818.

The City of Bloomington does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status or status with regard to public assistance in employment or the provision of services. The City of Bloomington does not discriminate on the basis of disability in the admission or access to, or treatment or employment in, its programs or activities. Upon request, accommodation will be provided to allow individuals with disabilities to participate in all City of Bloomington services, programs and activities. The City has designated coordinators to facilitate compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), as required by Section 35.107 of the U.S. Department of Justice Regulations, and to coordinate compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as mandated by Section 8.53 of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Regulations. For information, contact the Human Services Division, City of Bloomington, 2215 West Old Shakopee Road, Bloomington MN 55431-3096; phone: 952-

City financially sound in wake of tragic events

The financial status of the City of Bloomington remains strong despite the downturn of the U.S. economy and the events that occurred on September 11. Early estimates for 2001 showed revenues exceeding expenditures by \$1.8 to \$2 million.

Overall, the City's third quarter results were in line with the budget. Tax revenues which were most impacted by recent events, such as hotel/motel and admissions taxes, showed an estimated 23 percent decline through September 30. Should these revenues continue to decline in the last quarter, the impact is expected to be absorbed by the remaining 2001 contingency budget.

Responsible budgeting

The City is building a responsible budget based on estimates for 2002. "We will be reaching out to the community, the Metropolitan Airports Commission, schools and the hospitality industry to develop reasonable forecasts to use in the City's budget," said Bloomington Chief Financial Officer Terri Heaton. "Building permits are strong and have not yet been impacted. However, they are being monitored as to what may happen long-term to the economy."

Local economic impact

The areas most affected by the economic downturn include:

- ◆ Admissions.
- ◆ Hospitality and liquor taxes.
- ◆ Interest rates.
- ◆ Building permits.
- ◆ Licensing.

"The City's revenue streams for outstanding debt are strong. We have sufficient coverage for repayment with-

out relying heavily on volatile revenues," Heaton said. "The City has always budgeted for contingencies. A backup plan and annual strategies to withstand a downturn are in place, if needed."

Bond rating

The City of Bloomington maintains Aaa and AAA bond ratings, the highest ratings awarded respectively by the bond agencies, Moody's and Standard & Poor's.

Last year, the City presented to the bond agency many scenarios, including extreme cases, on how the City would weather an economic downturn. The rating agencies determined there was minimal, if any, risk that the City would default on any outstanding bonds. The bond rating agencies said the high ratings reflect the City's strong, conservatively managed financial operations and manageable debt burden.

Interest rates

By law the City can only invest in the most conservative investments, such as investment-grade government-backed bonds, so that the principal of City investments is protected. As a result, during a time when interest rates are low, earnings are also low. The City has been monitoring the lower interest rate trends and has developed budgets accordingly. The good news is that lower interest rates also apply when the City issues bonds, which saves money on interest costs.

Preliminary levy

The City Council approved a 5.5 percent increase in the preliminary levy over 2001. State tax laws will dramatically change tax base and support, resulting in tax reductions for

Good for the economy



The City's tax levy, combined with other local taxing units' rates and the state tax restructuring, results in significant decreases in property taxes for 2002. **The average home in Bloomington, valued at \$178,900*, would yield a tax reduction of 20 percent or \$485 per year.** This tax break could benefit the local economy at a time when it is needed most.

* The market value on residential properties averaged a 12.7 percent increase.

all property types. The state has taken over a large portion of school funding and a change in class rates has compressed the City's tax base. See above sidebar.

Capital projects

Capital improvement projects currently underway within the City are being built from reserves and fees already in place. Projects scheduled over the next two years include:

- ◆ Police/City Hall/Arts Center facilities.
- ◆ Public Works addition.
- ◆ Upgrade of Valley View Pool to an aquatic center.
- ◆ Water Treatment Plant expansion.

Building these much-needed facilities at this time provides jobs, purchases materials that will benefit our economy and reduces costs through increased construction competition.

For more information, call Bloomington Chief Financial Officer Terri Heaton at 952-563-8791. ◆

Founder of diversity center awarded Human Rights honor

For ensuring human rights for Bloomington citizens, **Dr. A. Ghafar Lakanwal** was presented the **Omar Bonderud Human Rights Award** by the Human Rights Commission at this month's City Council meeting. Lakanwal uses education to improve cultural understanding and relationships for all people.

Making a difference

Lakanwal founded the Minnesota Cultural Diversity Center, a non-profit organization that promotes multicultural understanding and inclusiveness in the workplace and in the community. He serves as a board member for the St. Paul Area Red Cross and the Council of Asian-Pacific Minnesotans.

Background

A native of Afghanistan, Lakanwal worked as the Minister of Agriculture in Afghanistan in 1982. He served as the Deputy Foreign Minister and head of the Afghan Delegation to the United Nations General Assembly in 1988. Lakanwal has lived in Bloomington for 13 years and became an American citizen in 1996.

Award History

The Omar Bonderud Award is presented by the Bloomington Human Rights Commission to recognize individuals or organizations that have made significant contributions to ensuring the rights of people in the community. Omar Bonderud was the first chair of the Bloomington Human Rights Commission. For information, call 952-563-8733, TTY 952-563-8740, or visit the City of Bloomington's Web site at www.ci.bloomington.mn.us. ◆



Bloomington remembers former Mayor Lindau

When James Lindau, Mayor of Bloomington from 1977 through 1987, passed away in September he was remembered for being the "right person at the right time for Bloomington." That was according to long-time friend and Bloomington Port Authority president, Lloyd Bergquist, who also described the former Mayor as determined, a creative thinker and risk taker.

Visionary

Though it was much-criticized at the time, Lindau was the key figure in the development of the Metropolitan Stadium site into the Mall of America. The Mall became the stepping stone to revitalization of the Airport South area attracting new businesses and funding of public infrastructure improvements. It is now the biggest tourist attraction in Minnesota and one of the largest in the nation.

Bloomington grew under his leadership

During his eleven years as Mayor, Bloomington grew from Minnesota's fourth-largest to third-largest city, more than doubled its tax base and added 20,000 jobs. In 1998, Lindau received the Bloomington Legacy Award from the Bloomington Community Foundation for his demonstrated community leadership and high ethical standards.

"He loved Bloomington, as was evidenced by the tremendous energy and effort he put into the development and growth of the community during his tenure as Mayor," said Mayor Gene Winstead. "Jim Lindau will long be remembered for building Bloomington into the great community it is today." ◆



In May 1999, a portion of East 81st Street, north of the Mall of America between TH77 (Cedar Avenue) and 24th Avenue, was renamed Lindau Lane in recognition of James Lindau's many contributions to the city.

Bureau helps keep Bloomington on the map

The Bloomington Convention and Visitors Bureau promotes Bloomington, its hotels, businesses and attractions to visitors around the world.

A city that "has it all"

In 1973, the Bureau was established in response to the hospitality community seeking to attract tourists, meetings and conventions. By 1993, the hospitality industry had grown to 20,000 employees and Bloomington, home of the Mall of America, was on its

way to becoming a popular destination for travelers from around the world. Today, due in part to the marketing efforts of the Bureau, Bloomington is a destination leader for meetings, conventions and visitors.

Benefits of visitor spending

Travelers benefit Bloomington. They spend money that generates tax revenue. These dollars circulate into the local and state economy and directly impact many

businesses, such as restaurants, hotels and shopping centers, whose survival and growth depend on the travel industry. Tax revenues also stimulate future economic development.

The Bloomington Convention and Visitors Bureau is a useful resource when planning tours, vacations, meetings and events.

For information, call 952-858-8500 or visit www.bloomingtonmn.org. ◆



PARKS, RECREATION & ARTS UPDATE

For more information, call Parks and Recreation at 952-563-8877.

Adult Sports

Adult tennis drills

Instructed by a certified teaching professional, drills are practice sessions to improve stroke production. Facilities include locker rooms, showers, sauna, whirlpool, steam room, swimming pool, indoor track and exercise room.

When: January 2 - February 7 or
February 13 - March 21 (2 sessions)
Times: Beginner Wednesdays, 11:30 - 12:30 p.m.
Intermediate Thursdays, 6:30 - 7:30 p.m.
Where: 98th St. Northwest Athletic Club (I-35W at 98th St.)
Cost: \$49.50 for six one-hour lessons.
Limit: Six per class; minimum of four to hold class.
Register: Call Parks and Recreation.

Daytime volleyball

All games are played at the Bloomington Armory, 3300 West 98th Street. Feel free to show up alone; teams are formed on the spot each week.

When: Tuesdays and Thursdays, beginning January 3.
Time: 9:30 - 11 a.m.
Cost: \$1 each session.

Youth Activities

Bloomington Athletic Association (BAA)



BAA Information Line: 952-888-0807

January Boys and Girls Indoor Soccer (grades K - 2)
Girls Volleyball (grades 4 - 12)
March Boys and Girls Baseball Programs
Mini-Mite (ages 5 - 6)
In-House (ages 7 - 15)
Majors (grades 9 - 11)
Traveling (ages 10 - 15)
Girls Softball (ages 7 - 18)

Registration dates are available on the BAA Information Line. The *BAA Update* is distributed in the Bloomington Public Schools and these private schools: Nativity of Mary; Mt. Hope Redemption; Bethany Academy and Bloomington Lutheran. Residents with children attending other schools can call the BAA Information Line and request to be put on the BAA mailing list.

Help wanted

Girls Volleyball Director

For more information, call Barb Clawson at 952-563-8786.



Bloomington Art Center

"A Christmas Carol"

Bloomington Art Center presents a new adaptation of the timeless holiday classic, *"A Christmas Carol."* A multigenerational cast of talented local actors will bring to life the familiar story of Ebenezer Scrooge and his spiritual transformation one cold Christmas morning.

Evenings: Saturdays, December 8 - 22,
Thursdays - Fridays, December 13 - 21
7 p.m.
Matinees: Saturdays, December 8 - 22
2 p.m.
Where: Northwestern Health Science University,
84th and Penn Avenue South.
Tickets: Adults \$10;
Seniors/students/BAC members \$8;
Children 12 and under \$6.
For more information, call 952-563-4777. ♦



Adaptive Recreation and Learning Exchange

ARLE provides opportunities for residents with disabilities to participate in recreation and leisure programming, community education and related services. Activities are offered for individuals with every ability level in both inclusive and adaptive settings. The City makes every reasonable effort to welcome residents with disabilities in all programs offered by Parks and Recreation. Call for a quarterly brochure of ARLE programs.

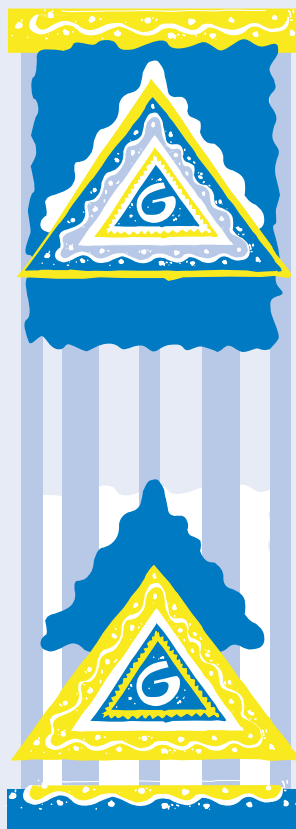
Totally, Talents & Tunes

Actors of all abilities join to present a musical production directed by Janet Beard. This hour-long performance, adapted from Barbara Redlin's "Talents & Tunes, Together," is sponsored by AR&LE. Funding is provided, in part by the Minnesota Legislature through a grant from the Metropolitan Regional Arts Council, the Edina Rotary Club, the Edina Foundation and the Transportation Resource to Aid Independent Living.

When: Saturday, March 9.
Times: 3 p.m. and 7 p.m.
Where: Richfield High School, 7001 Harriet Ave. S.
Tickets: Adults \$5; Students \$3.

For more information, call 612-861-9361. ♦

FREEDOM to explore in a SAFE place



Galaxy Youth Center

This is the place where Bloomington youth in grades 6 - 8 gather during non-school hours. Kids find a purpose and meaning through recreation, leadership, socialization, learning and service.

Fun for everyone

With four main activity rooms, access to gymnasiums, a swimming pool and outdoor fields, Galaxy Youth Center has something for every kid. While events, activities and service projects are planned throughout the year, Galaxy's unstructured format allows kids the freedom to explore their own special interests.

Trained staff

The Galaxy Youth Center staff is trained in adolescent development and CPR/First Aid. They have created an atmosphere of acceptance, respect and fun for every student.

When: Monday - Friday, 2:20 - 6 p.m.

Where: Valley View Middle School,
8900 Portland Avenue South.

Fee: \$25 per quarter or 50 cents per day.
Scholarships are available.

Transportation is available from Oak Grove and Olson Middle Schools to Valley View Middle School. Students may ride activity buses home. For more information, call 952-886-8848. ♦



This month-long series of events combines community and family fun with educational programs and ceremonies to honor organizations who help kids and kids who help others. Parks and Recreation, Bloomington Public Schools, Bloomington United for Youth and many other community groups call upon residents to join in the celebration of our children.

Please sponsor activities that foster the mission of Bloomington Loves Its Kids. To participate, call Chad Duerkop at 952-563-8877.

Kick-Off

Friday, February 1
6:30 p.m.

Knott's Camp Snoopy,
Mall of America

Recognition Ceremony

for those who have done something special
to benefit our community!

♥ Youth ♥

♥ Volunteer Groups ♥

♥ Volunteer organizations that serve youth ♥

Community Carnival

Saturday, February 23
12:30 - 3 p.m.

Northwestern Health Sciences
University, 84th and Penn

♥ Entertainment ♥ Exhibits ♥

♥ Multi-Cultural Event ♥ Pie Walk ♥

♥ Preschool Play Room ♥

♥ AND ♥

♥ Much ♥ Much ♥ More! ♥